

# Network News

Parent Information Network  
Arizona Department of Education  
Exceptional Student Services  
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## Question and Answer Column

This column was developed to help parents be proactive and to consider what to do to help their child succeed in school. At this time of year, some parents are told that their child may not be doing well in school. In fact, there is a danger of the child being retained in the same grade for next school year.

**Q.** What should I do if my child is receiving special education services, but is still failing in school?

**A.** The *individual* needs of the child must be addressed to ensure success in school. The most important element is to ensure the *I* is considered in an *Individualized Education Program* (IEP). The information below presents a Five Part Plan to help ensure success in school.

1. Call or write to the school and ask for a review of the IEP. This IEP review should be a communication conference with teachers and counselors. The IEP review can take place by a telephone conference call or in a face-to-face meeting. The review will set the tone for future positive communication.

It's important that parents become familiar with their child's IEP before the telephone conference or the meeting. Call the child's teacher to ask for a copy of the IEP if you are unable to locate your own copy.

Points which should be considered before a phone review or meeting:

- ☐ Is the child in general education most of the day, or in resource or self-contained classes?
- ☐ Is additional individualized instruction time needed, in your opinion?
- ☐ Is the placement appropriate for the child's needs?
- ☐ Does the schedule need to be adjusted?
- ☐ Has the child done his/her part in the class-room or in handing in homework assignments?
- ☐ Are expectations clear to the child and to those working with him/her?
- ☐ Does the student need more modifications in instruction or need adapted materials, for example:

notebook organizers, enlarged print texts, high contrast materials, page extenders to turn pages, book holders, a multiplication grid, study sheets to organize material, or taped text books?

☐ Has the IEP team adopted a modified grading system for all teachers responsible for the child and made it part of the IEP?

2. If the child has not been part of the review process, it may be appropriate to include him/her now. This might necessitate a second meeting for parents and school staff. It is critical that this be a positive meeting for students, so it is up to the adults to make it productive and positive.

The child should have an awareness of his/her IEP and what services are included. The child and parent need to discuss all of their concerns prior to the meeting. The child can self-advocate or the parent can do the advocating to clarify concerns or recommendations to the school staff. A cooperative effort is essential. If the parents, student, and staff feel that collaboration is possible, the next step will be successful.

3. The third step is to set up a plan for this success. A simple chart to record daily or weekly progress may be all that's needed. Items to consider for the plan or chart might be: Objective of Targeted Behavior; Daily or Weekly Student Learning (skills); a space for the parent's initials for daily homework; and a space for the initials of the person responsible (child or teacher).

4. The fourth step is devising a method for on-going communication that is daily, weekly, or monthly. Staff and parents need to include in the plan how and when they will communicate: notes, e-mail, phone calls, or face-to-face meetings.

5. The fifth step is a return to the first step to review and revise the IEP as necessary. Failure in school means the individual needs of the child are not being met, for whatever reason. Why is the child in special education? Specialized techniques and services such as assistive technology are intended to make the child successful. It's the responsibility of everyone involved, including the child, to work collaboratively to make that happen.

***Collaborate: To work together,  
especially in a joint intellectual effort.***

If you have an upcoming IEP review, or want to request a review, the following documents from the PIN Clearinghouse may be of help to you:

IE02 10 Common Mistakes Parents Make During the IEP Meeting  
IE11 Preparing for the IEP: Helpful Hints  
IE12 The IEP Meeting Sequence  
PR06 Creating a Home File\*  
SP08 Mantengan sus archivos al día\*

\* available at [www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/documents](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/documents)

To order any of the PIN Clearinghouse documents which are not available on the Home Page, contact the PIN Specialist for your county:

***Apache and Navajo Counties***

Jana Bays, 928-289-6760

E-mail: JLBAYS@winslow-az.net

***Cochise, Graham, and Greenlee Counties***

Karen Santa Maria, 520-742-6075

E-mail: merkade@cybertrails.com

***Coconino, Mohave, and Yavapai Counties***

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## **Full Life Ahead...**

...was the theme of a day-long workshop recently presented by authors Judy Barclay and Jan Cobb, in Phoenix. The workshop was based on the book, *Full Life Ahead: A Workbook and Guide to Adult Life for Students & Families of Students with DisAbilities*. The guide, "...written by parents for parents, provides families, advocates, self-advocates and professionals a step-by-step program for unleashing the resources and expertise of both the system and the community to build a full life for those who experience disability in their lives."

The book is particularly helpful for students who will be making the transition from high school to adult life in the near future. It's also a very useful guide if you have a family member who is still working towards becoming more independent in the community.

Some of the topics dealt with in the workbook and guide are:

❑ Creating a Résumé

- ☐ Things to Think About (Life Skills, Social Skills, Housing Options, Career/ Employment, Leisure/Recreation, Transportation, Education, Community Participation, Financial/Legal Concerns, Medical/Support Services)
- ☐ Ten Practical Tips for Parents
- ☐ A List of Important Records and Papers
- ☐ Becoming My Own Self-Advocate
- ☐ Job Interviews
- ☐ Types of Employment
- ☐ Will I Go to College?
- ☐ What Laws Apply to Me in Colleges, Universities, and Technical Schools?
- ☐ About Friends and Recreation
- ☐ Rights and Responsibilities of a Citizen

Many more topics, too numerous to mention in the space available here, are included.

Available as a hard copy for \$15.00 or in CD form for \$5.00, the guide may be ordered from the Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC), P.O. Box 244023, Auburn University Montgomery, Montgomery, AL 36124, phone 334-244-3100, fax 334-244-3101. *Checks should be made payable to AUM/SERRC.*

For additional information on transition, contact the PIN Specialist for your county, listed in the article above, or visit the following web sites:  
[www.ade.az.gov/ess/transitionservices/](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/transitionservices/)  
[www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/documents/transition/](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/documents/transition/)

## **New documents in PIN Clearinghouse**

The following documents have recently been added to the Parent Information Network Clearinghouse. To obtain a copy, contact your PIN Specialist listed in the first article above.

- BR21 20 Things to Do Instead of Hurting Someone Back
- DR18 Helping Young Children with Learning Disabilities at Home
- EC02 10 Ways To Nurture Learning in Preschoolers and Kindergartners
- EC09 Tomorrow's Brainchild: The First Years Last Forever
- GR05 National Website Listings
- GR06 Websites with Resources in Other Languages
- PR03 Parenting Styles Power, Powerless, & Empowered
- SA07 Understanding the Differences Between IDEA and 504
- SA10 From Emotions to Advocacy
- SA26 8 Steps to Conflict Resolution

- SE09 Private Special Education Schools
- SE10 Medicaid in the Public Schools
- SE23 Learning Styles Inventory
- SE24 Homework Practices that Support Students with Disabilities
- SE25 How to Help Show You Think Education and Homework are Important
- TR14 Vocational Rehabilitation Information
- TR15 Important Issues Transitioning to College

## **New tapes in the PIN Clearinghouse**

The following audio and/or video tapes have been added to the PIN Clearinghouse. To make arrangements to borrow an item, contact Alice Villarreal by phone, 602-542-3852, or e-mail, [avillar@ade.az.gov](mailto:avillar@ade.az.gov).

- AV15 How to Help Your Child Succeed in School (ADHD and LD)
- AV26 Learning Your Rights (Navajo- video)
- AV27 Learning Your Rights (Navajo- audio)
- AV50 Chill: Straight Talk about Stress
- AV53 Dyslexia: A Different Kind of Mind
- AV92 Listening to Children: A child's inner strengths through their drawings
- AV93 Discover IDEA: An Overview of provisions designed to support achievement for children with disabilities
- AV98 ADHD: What Do We know?
- AV99 ADHD: What Can we do?

## **Special Education Spring Forum**

The Second Special Education Spring Forum for Parents was held on Sat., Mar. 23, at the Holiday Inn Select Airport, in Phoenix. Participants from thirty-four cities and towns were represented at the forum.

Workshops on a variety of topics were offered and well received, including a shortened version of a day-long workshop Full Life Ahead described above; strategies for helping teenagers to stay in school; causes and results of school violence and bullying; positive behavior supports for someone with challenging behaviors; a teen-ager becoming an adult; the Arizona Reading Initiative; guardianship issues; best practices in autism; a video workshop on ADHD; Child Find; and what to do when you have issues and concerns about school problems.

A highlight of this year's forum was the exhibit hall in which twenty community agencies and service providers displayed printed information and had dialogue with booth visitors.

If you were unable to attend the forum and need information on any of the topics, please contact the PIN Specialist for your county listed in the first article above.

## **Reauthorization of IDEA**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is undergoing reauthorization in Congress. Regional hearings were held in the fall in several cities, with comments submitted by individuals and by advocacy organizations. Full funding, discipline, functional behavioral assessments, transition planning, adequate mental health supports, and early intervention appear to be some of the concerns.

For more information on the reauthorization of IDEA, visit the web site of the organization for your child's disability; [www.pacer.org/legislation/](http://www.pacer.org/legislation/), the web site for PACER; or [www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/), at the U.S. Department of Education.

## **New advocacy guide available**

From Emotions to Advocacy: The Special Education Survival Guide, by Pam and Pete Wright, offers practical guidance to new and experienced advocates. Published by Harbor House Law Press, Inc., the book can be ordered online at [www.harborhouselaw.com](http://www.harborhouselaw.com), or through your local book store. You may also request it through your library. The ISBN is 1-892320-08-8.

"This practical, user-friendly book includes hundreds of strategies, tips, warnings, and Internet resources ...includes dozens of worksheets, forms, and sample letters that you can tailor to your needs. Visit the companion web site at [www.fetaweb.com](http://www.fetaweb.com) for up-to-date legal and advocacy information."

Additional advocacy information on a variety of topics can be found at [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com).

## Need some SPED training?

Visit the web site [www.ade.az.gov/ess/eapn](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/eapn) for a list of upcoming trainings and/or workshops. If you're in need of information and can't attend any for parents offered by various agencies, contact the PIN Specialist for your county, listed in the first article above. They can work with you in providing information or training in an alternative way. Visit the Parent Information Network web site for documents, and for links to other agencies or organizations: [www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals).

## Summer recreation opportunities

Camps and recreational activities give children a chance to form new friendships and teach or reinforce important social skills. Students on a year-round school schedule can still take advantage of the summer offerings for a few weeks during inter-sessions. For additional information on summer activities, contact your PIN Specialist listed in the first article above, or visit the web site [www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/directoryinfo/Blues.pdf](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/directoryinfo/Blues.pdf), and scroll down to Recreation and Leisure.

Registration deadlines are fast approaching! It's important to get as much information as possible in order to make an informed decision. Discussions with your child and consideration of his or her interests and abilities can make the difference between a GREAT summer experience or one that is barely tolerable.

If camp *is* a possibility, you may want to consider:

- ☐ will a neighborhood day camp be best or is your child ready for overnight or residential camp?
- ☐ if special health care needs are a concern, which camp has a staff that best meets those needs and has a nurse on duty, 24 hours a day?
- ☐ will skills in reading, language, or physical development be maintained?
- ☐ is the camp approved by any state agency or camp accreditation group?

Programs may also be available in your school district, and in city or county recreation departments.

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